

Jesus is Our Guide – the Light of life

2 Corinthians 5:7

St. Paul writes, “We walk by faith, not by sight” (RSV). That passage is easy to agree with. We know that our life as a child of God is a life of faith—a faith given to us by God’s Holy Spirit. That happens at our Baptism, where through Water and the Word, the Holy Spirit worked faith in our hearts.

Yes, for some, it may have been later in life, when, by the Spirit working through the Word of God, we were brought to faith — to know and believe in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. Either way, it is a true saying that on this journey we walk as children of God, we walk by faith, not by sight.

God is Immanuel — God with us. We know that God is protecting us, God is guiding us, even though we may not be able to see him. Our faith assures us that God is indeed with us, even though what we see in the world may try to convince us that such is not the case.

Intellectually we agree (argue, assert, defend) that it is true that we walk by faith, not by sight,

in **reality** that is just a bunch of words until we find ourselves in a place where we cannot see —when the darkness around us becomes too deep, and the light of our faith seems so small.

How well do you handle darkness? What if suddenly all the lights went out and we would be cast into complete darkness. How would you feel? How would you react? Would you react with total calmness, or would there be feelings of fear? Perhaps terror? Would you reach out for others? Would you call out?

Perhaps you have had a chance to know total darkness. If you take a tour into a cave, deep in the earth, sometimes the guide will turn out the lights meant to light the path. Then you discover total darkness. There is absolutely no light in the cave. It is telling to see what our reaction is to that complete darkness.

Most of us don’t handle the darkness very well. In the darkness we are reduced to being lost children, searching, frightened, wondering, reaching out for another hand to hold.

As frightening as darkness may be to us, there is another kind of darkness that we all must deal with at times—a ***darkness of the soul*** and of the spirit. We experience it at critical times in our lives. Some of us experience it often. But like the physical darkness, it can leave us frightened and feeling very helpless and very alone. And when we are experiencing that darkness, it is not quite so easy to just say, “We walk by faith, not by sight.”

Why are there times of darkness? The simple answer is that we still live in a sin-filled world. And with sin comes the darkness of suffering, the darkness of struggle, the darkness of death.



Knowing that it comes to each one of us does not make going through the darkness any easier. What we long for is something to break through and get rid of the darkness. What we long for is light.

The light of God is exactly what the new born Savior brings. He is the light of the world, and in faith, we are given light to guide us, to help us on our journey through the darkness.

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son” (John 3:16). The gift of light comes, not because the world deserves it, not because we have done the right things, **but** because God loves his creation. God offers light. We cannot create spiritual light. We cannot dispel the darkness on our own. We can only bask in the light that God has given us in Jesus Christ, the Light of the world. We accept the light on faith.

Our light is so small, and the darkness is great. Yes, we walk by faith, but we would love to have more light. And we do have more light, for we do not walk this path alone. We belong to a fellowship of light—a fellowship of faith. When the Holy Spirit brings us to faith, he also gathers us into the family of faith, the Church. And when we are united with others, not only is our weak and faltering light of faith strengthened, but our light can help strengthen others. And together, the darkness is expelled.

A pastor was teaching a confirmation lesson on the work of the Holy Spirit and the concept of the Church.

After discussing the importance of the work of God’s Spirit, and why God gathers us into a fellowship of faith, the pastor gave each person an unlit candle and asked the group to stand in one big circle.

Someone turned out all the lights. The room went totally dark, and even though there were more than a dozen or so people in the room, in the darkness each person felt alone.

The pastor explained that darkness is what sin does—it separates us from one another and leaves us alone.

After being in that darkness for a while, the pastor lit a candle.

He then lit the candles of those standing on either side of him.

Slowly the light was passed from one to the next. Gradually the light in the room grew.

What the participants noticed was not so much the light growing ... rather, it was the darkness receding. The darkness was being replaced by light. After the light had been passed all around, some observed that while each only had one light, that light, combined with the others in the church, caused the darkness to recede.

Then, someone went around and blew out first one candle, then another.

The pastor explained that this is what Satan wants. We all experience moments of darkness



and the light of our faith grows dim or even goes out.

Each time this happened, the person standing next to the person with the extinguished candle reached over and quickly relit it. That is the work of the Church in action, one believer reaching out and helping another believer who is caught in darkness.

The psalmist assures us that when we go through the valley of the shadow of death, God is with us (Psalm 23:4). And he is with us through the Church—through fellow believers who walk through the darkness with us.

We pass through many times of spiritual darkness in our lives.

The trials of life can cause us to fall into a valley of deep darkness. Confident about God, in the darkness we comfort one another with the truth that no valley is so deep that the light of Christ is not there.

“But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God” (John 3:21 NIV).

As Christmas comes nearer, we are reminded that Christ is coming, to be the light of life for us. The light of life is Jesus our guide.

2 Corinthians 5:7 “We walk by faith, not by sight” Jesus is our guide. AMEN

